

# **EXHIBIT 20**

Shirley

## Foster Care FAQ

Q: Why do you recruit only Protestant Christian foster parents?

A: Miracle Hill is first and foremost a Christian ministry, not a social services agency. We have a long history of serving homeless children and adults with a gospel-driven mission. Our mission statement is clear: ***Miracle Hill exists that homeless children and adults receive food and shelter with compassion, hear the good news of Jesus Christ, and move toward healthy relationships and stability.*** Because we consider foster parents partners in ministry and because foster parents are in a position of spiritual influence, we recruit those who share our key doctrinal beliefs, including our beliefs on marriage: *We believe God ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption. We believe God's design for marriage is the legal joining of one man and one woman in a life-long covenant relationship.*

Protecting the rights of religious providers doesn't exclude others; it simply means that people of faith who prefer to partner with a provider who shares their religious motivation are able to do so and are thus more likely to become foster parents.

Q: Aren't you limiting the ability of non-Christian foster parents to participate in the system?

A: No, we are not limiting access at all. Anyone who wants to foster can do so through their local Department of Social Services. That is always an option. Additionally, there are several other private/non-profit agencies besides Miracle Hill that recruit and support foster families in the Upstate. A listing can be found at [www.care2foster.org](http://www.care2foster.org). When individuals who hold different religious beliefs contact us, we're pleased to help them connect to other agencies that will be a better fit or refer them directly to DSS. Prospective foster parents do have choices.

Q: How do you determine if someone meets your criteria?

A: Prospective foster parents complete an online inquiry form which helps us determine not only if they live within the geographic region we serve but also if they identify as a Protestant Christian who is desiring to partner with us in ministry.

Q: What do you do when a Jewish, Muslim, Hindu or another person with a different belief system, or no belief at all, inquiries about becoming a foster parent?

A: When individuals who hold different religious beliefs (or no beliefs at all) contact us, we're pleased to help them connect to other agencies that will be a better fit or refer them directly to DSS. Every qualified person in every county in the state who wishes to become a foster parent is still able to do so.

Additionally, we are in favor of other organizations forming in order to provide more foster homes in our state, and we would advocate for the right of other (non-Christian) religious or non-religious organizations to license and serve foster families.

Q: If your foster care program has been operating since 1988, why is there a problem now?

A: In the final days of the Obama administration (early 2017), the US Department of Health and Human Services added a prohibition against religious discrimination to the regulation that covers organizations providing social services. Because South Carolina DSS works with HHS for funding, DSS had to assess whether or not any organizations they had been working with were using a religious screen for prospective foster parents. Because Miracle Hill recruits only Protestant Christian parents, we were told that this practice is unlawful. We were told that our license would not be renewed unless we abandoned our Christian standards.

Q: Besides your doctrinal beliefs, what else makes Miracle Hill different from other foster care agencies?

A: Our program puts a special emphasis on caring for the foster parents. Our theme of “You Matter” helps remind our staff that it is important for us to consistently find ways to support our parents physically, emotionally and spiritually. For example, we regularly seek out and connect with community partners to supply items needed (cleaning supplies, school supplies, clothing, etc.). Our staff also regularly pray for the families under their care.

Q: Why did you ask Governor McMaster and the state legislature to intervene on your behalf?

A: When DSS threatened Miracle Hill Foster Care with the loss of our license, we knew that government intervention on our behalf would be needed in order to continue operating according to our religious convictions. Regardless of funding, if we do not have the right to exist, then the pool of foster families in South Carolina will be decreased. Faith-based organizations should be allowed to exist and operate according to their beliefs.

Q: If the shortage of foster parents is so severe in South Carolina, why not accept anyone into your program?

A: Every qualified person in every county in the state who wishes to become a foster parent is able to do so. Our partnering with like-minded people of faith doesn’t limit access nor does it prevent anyone from fostering. Miracle Hill adds to the pool of foster homes in South Carolina by proactively recruiting people of faith who prefer to partner with a provider who shares their religious motivation. If we are not allowed to recruit according to our religious beliefs, then we would no longer be fulfilling our mission. As a religious organization, it is not our responsibility to do the job of DSS. We are simply a valued partner seeking to do what we can to help.

Q: Can single or divorced people participate in your program?

A: Yes, single or divorced people are welcome to participate in our program. Like other foster parents, they must support our doctrinal statement and beliefs on marriage.

Q: If a gay or lesbian married couple is Christian, can they foster through Miracle Hill?

A: No, we would not be able to work with a gay or lesbian married couple because they would not accept our beliefs on marriage: *We believe God ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption. We believe God's design for marriage is the legal joining of one man and one woman in a life-long covenant relationship.* We have never opposed the licensing of prospective foster parents with whom we disagree on religious matters. We would encourage the couple to consider volunteering with any of the many other organizations available, including their local DSS office.

Q: What kind of government funding do you receive for your foster care program?

A: Until three years ago, Miracle Hill was not reimbursed for any expenses related to foster care. At that time, DSS requested that we and other foster care agencies increase our efforts to recruit foster parents, and because we had exhausted our available funds we agreed to do so if they could help with some of the costs. That's when we began to receive partial reimbursements for the children DSS chooses to place with our foster parents. We receive funding only if DSS chooses to place a child with us. The reimbursements *do not* cover our cost of recruiting foster parents. Additionally, the reimbursements only cover about half of what it costs us to provide care coordination for our foster families.

Q: What other sources of funding does your foster program receive?

A: Our organization is primarily funded by private donations. We receive some funding through grants and organizations.

Q: How do children get placed with a Miracle Hill foster family?

A: DSS has the sole responsibility for placing children in foster homes and can decide which foster care agency they would like to work with for a particular child. DSS does not have to choose to work with Miracle Hill at all. Although Miracle Hill Foster Care is called a child placing agency (CPA) by the state, we do not actually place the children.

Q: Do foster children have to attend church or participate in other kinds of religious activities with your foster parents?

A: Foster children participate in as many activities as possible with their foster family, just as a biological child would do. However, if a foster child's biological parents have specifically requested that their child not participate in religious activities, the foster family would have to respect those wishes. DSS has the responsibility to inform prospective foster parents about those wishes prior to placement so that the prospective parents can decide if they are able to fulfill the biological parents' request.

Q: What happens to a foster child who does not come from a Christian background?

A: Biological parents have the right to tell DSS that they want their child placed/not placed in a home that is of a particular religion. Foster families are required by DSS to respect the religious backgrounds of the children who come into their homes. If the prospective foster parent is not able to do so, then DSS will not place the child in that particular home.

Q: If the Department of Health and Human Services does not provide a waiver to allow you to continue recruiting like-minded people of faith, what will happen to your foster care program?

A: We don't know for sure, but we think DSS may not renew our license, thereby ending our ability to serve as a child placing agency.

Q: If, until three years ago, you were providing foster parents without government aid, why not end the controversy and do what you can with private funding?

A: Because of the new HHS regulation enacted in 2017, the issue is now one of licensing, not funding. DSS has been put on notice about working with agencies that have a religious requirement. Even if we no longer take funding, DSS may not be allowed to license and work with us as a child placing agency (CPA). Without a license, what we are able to actually do in the foster care arena will be limited, if not prevented entirely.